

## NO MAN'S LAND SPLIT BY VILNA AND KOVNO

No Actual Fighting, but  
Soldiers Is Guarding  
Imaginary Line.

### ANNEXATION A FACT

Poland's Grip on Vilna Is  
Learned on Grounds by  
'Herald' Writer.

### KOVNO PRISONS FILLED

Attitude of Lett Government  
Toward Poles Marked by  
Great Injustice.

Special Correspondence to THE NEW YORK  
HERALD.

By CAPT. FRANCIS MCWILLIAMS.

KOVNO, Feb. 25.—I am writing from Kovno, after having motored to Vilna, interviewed Mr. Mestavitch, the civil Governor who replaced Gen. Zeligovsky, and returned again to the capital of Lithuania. The Kovno and Vilna districts are divided by the only visible No Man's Land which still exists in Europe. There is no fighting, but the narrow strip of neutral zone fixed by the officials of the League of Nations is a real No Man's Land of the fighting days, being carefully protected by barbed wire, sentry posts, and obstacles of all the usual description. Practically all the Lithuanian army is scattered in the villages between Kovno and the frontier; and I found it to be a well disciplined army, strong in field artillery and with plenty of horses.

On the Polish side there is only one platoon of soldiers at the frontier, and there is nobody at all looking after the one excellent system of barbed wire that has been put up halfway between Vilna and the frontier. But the Poles can afford to dispense with precautions, for their army in Vilna is numerous and well appointed. The streets are patrolled by Uhlars in their brilliant uniforms, and I saw several batteries of artillery traversing the streets.

The leading hotel, the St. George, is crammed with Polish officers all day long, and the scene there and in the streets reminds one of the early days of the great war in London, everybody being in uniform, great Generals moving about like gorgeous peacocks, and a constant saluting, clanking of sabers, jingling of spurs, and standing to attention, going on from morning to night in all public places. General Zeligovsky has left Vilna and a civilian, M. Mestavitch, has taken his place; but this pretense at veiling the mailed fist is a very thin pretense for other Generals are there. I saw one highly imposing specimen in the restaurant of the St. George, and I do not know how many others are in Vilna. Portraits of Zeligovsky and Pilsudski are displayed everywhere, even at the Polish Control Post on the frontier, and, before leaving, I was obliged to get a visa not from a local Vilna authority, but from the Polish Delegation. All these Polish functionaries were, however, exceedingly polite and efficient; but it is clear that the Vilna territory is already practically annexed to Poland.

#### Victory for Annexation.

M. Mestavitch, the Civil Governor, discussed with me the results of the recent plebiscite. He told me that in the town of Vilna the elections had gone overwhelmingly in favor of annexation to Poland, fifteen deputies being in favor of annexation, and only three for autonomy inside the Polish republic. There was not a single vote cast in favor of the Kovno Government, with which (in the Civil Governor's opinion) nobody in Vilna would have anything at all to do. In the country districts 40 per cent. of the people voted and 11 per cent. of the Jews. So, at least, M. Mestavitch said. A large majority of the country deputies want incorporation with Poland though they are really in favor of autonomy inside the Polish state. Out of 106 deputies in the Vilna Seim, 40 are in favor of downright annexation, while from 20 to 30 will vote for annexation in the hope that Poland will afterwards give them autonomy. The remainder want autonomy inside Poland but will have nothing to do with Lithuania, so that a great majority will therefore support incorporation.

The Jews in Vilna refrained from voting, all but about 11 per cent. of them; and before the elections came off, their leader, Dr. Vigodsky, tried to obtain concessions from the Vilna Government and from Warsaw, but apparently without success. What they wanted, according to M. Mestavitch, was the recognition of the Jews as a separate nationality by Poland, but the Civil Governor said that this would make them a State within a State and could not be conceded. Thus Dr. Vigodsky went to Warsaw, but got no satisfaction there so that the Jews refrained as a rule from voting. M. Mestavitch explained why he could not concede to the Jews all they wanted, but he maintained that they were absolutely equal before the law; and he said that he had gone as far as he could go in the direction of meeting their wishes by promising public money for their schools and special facilities for the supply of food prepared in the Jewish manner.

#### Strictly Polish Town.

He pointed out to me that Vilna was a thoroughly Polish town and showed to me by means of statistics which he had collected that much more than half the letters of addresses accounted in Warsaw before the war came from Vilna and Lithuania, showing how closely allied economically Lithuania was to Poland. These economic ties, he said, could not be broken in such a way as to separate Vilna from Warsaw; and Kovno had been so dependent, economically, on Vilna that, in his opinion, an independent Lithuania without Vilna must necessarily fall within the German orbit to the great political danger of Poland.

"Instead of discussing things temperately the Lithuanian Government at Kovno," he said, "behave with great violence and injustice towards the Poles inhabiting their territory. The prisons in Kovno are full of those Poles. One Lithuanian lady, Madame Larina, was imprisoned for a long time in a very filthy prison where she gave birth to a child amid a crowd of other prisoners and in a particularly filthy cell. The Polish guards in the prison were threatened with expropriation, for political not economic reasons. So long as this persecution goes on, things will only get

worse and calm discussion will be impossible. Moreover, the German orientation of the Lithuanians gives us grave concern. The Lithuanians use German money and are even subsidized, I think, by Germany. Dr. Purtschke, their recent Minister of Foreign Affairs, was much under German influence, and when he fell into disgrace owing to illegal sale of saccharin and cocaine to Russia, he naturally took refuge in Berlin, where he is now living. The Lithuanians think they can find allies among the other Baltic States, but, in my opinion, those States are ephemeral. They will disappear as soon as Russia and Germany grow strong again; and if Lithuania does not make some arrangement with Poland she will share their fate and become simply a corridor between Berlin and Petrograd and an acute danger on Poland's flank.

#### Warsaw Real Friend.

"Not that we wish Lithuania to lose her independence. We want her to remain entirely independent and to cultivate her own language and her own form of civilization; but it is imperative that she has a good understanding with Warsaw, her sincere wisher and her best friend. Even here in Vilna, a great Polish town of purely Polish culture, we are willing to grant the Lithuanians every facility for the development of their nationality and the cultivation of their national language. But, though they are a very small minority of our population, they wanted, when they were here, to crush the Polish Eagle. Thousands of our young men had joined the Polish cause when the Bolsheviks were here, in order to drive out the Reds and because there was then no Lithuanian army for them to join; but those patriots are now forbidden to enter Lithuania. The relatives of these young men in Lithuania are imprisoned and persecuted. That is unfair."

Vilna gave me the impression of being predominantly Polish probably because the Lithuanians who live there have to lie low. There are no Lithuanian signs in the streets, no Lithuanian placards among the innumerable posters which still cover the walls. Moreover, the Poles are making desperate efforts to Polishize it still further. Just before the elections many special trains were run from Warsaw to Vilna

and the easy and rapid communication between those two cities is in marked contrast to the slow and difficult communications between Vilna and Kovno, with a severed railway line on which no trains run with only one traveler every day, and with sentries, barbed wire entanglements, burnt houses and other tokens of war on the frontier.

Enormous numbers of Poles came into Vilna to take part in the recent elections and the Lithuanians say that very few of those voters had any right to vote. They even assert that whole battalions of Polish soldiers were dressed as civilians in order that they might receive their votes for incorporation, and my impression is that, owing to the way in which the elections were conducted in the presence of what might be called a Polish army of occupation, those elections were a sham, of which the result might easily have been foreseen. But there is no denying the immense enthusiasm with which the Poles are throwing themselves into the work of capturing Vilna for Poland. The ancient university is now in full blast again and one is greatly impressed by the enthusiasm and the competence of the professors. There are already fifteen hundred students in attendance of both sexes, and their white caps, with orange bands, are to be met with everywhere. Young men and young women are now educated together after the American system.

#### Disregard for Money.

Vast schemes for various improvements and new projects are discussed without any visible financial means of carrying them out. But the Poles do not think of money just now, hence the blackness of their financial position. This disregard for money is shown in the martial aspect of Vilna and the military enthusiasm which prevails among the Poles. Most of the leading Polish civilians of Vilna are in khaki or else in the gorgeously colored uniforms of the cavalry, the artillery and the air force. Local lawyers with swords at their hips are going about with red tabs around their caps and gleaming military enthusiasm which prevails among the Poles. Most of the leading Polish civilians of Vilna are in khaki or else in the gorgeously colored uniforms of the cavalry, the artillery and the air force. Local lawyers with swords at their hips are going about with red tabs around their caps and gleaming military enthusiasm which prevails among the Poles. Most of the leading Polish civilians of Vilna are in khaki or else in the gorgeously colored uniforms of the cavalry, the artillery and the air force. Local lawyers with swords at their hips are going about with red tabs around their caps and gleaming military enthusiasm which prevails among the Poles. Most of the leading Polish civilians of Vilna are in khaki or else in the gorgeously colored uniforms of the cavalry, the artillery and the air force. Local lawyers with swords at their hips are going about with red tabs around their caps and gleaming military enthusiasm which prevails among the Poles.

anti-climax. The war is over. There is no longer a mighty Russia to be encountered, only a poor little Lithuania to be downed. And Lithuania is so little and so poor that one cannot help feeling sympathy for her, and though she also exhibits a good deal of military preparation she certainly makes no military display. The difference between her little army stowed away in snowed up villages on the frontier and the great army of Poles now the second largest, if not the largest, in Europe, is much the same as the difference between the British army at the outbreak of the Transvaal war and the ragged commandos of the Boer farmers. None of the newly emancipated peoples of eastern Europe make such a sympathetic impression on the foreigner as the Lithuanians. The huge, cheerful soldiers and officers of Lithuania are extraordinarily simple and courteous. They have no swagger at all, and they adorn their guard houses with so many pictures of the Madonna and the Saints that one would almost think he was in Oberammergau or Tyrol.

The Poles in Vilna are persuaded, however, that such sympathy in a foreigner is due entirely to selfish considerations. "Lord Curzon," said one of those Poles to me, "is supporting the Lithuanians because he does not like to see Poland, the friend of France, established on the Baltic. He prefers to have between us and that seaboard a weak power like Lithuania, more amenable than Poland to British dictation."

#### KING DECORATES RICCI.

Honored for Service in Connection  
With Parley Here.

ROME, March 11.—King Victor Emmanuel has decorated Vittorio Ricci, Italian Ambassador to the United States, with the Grand Cross of the Order of St. Maurice and St. Lazarus in recognition of his services in connection with the Washington conference. Senator Luigi Albertini, a member of the Italian delegation, was given the Grand Cross of the Crown of Italy and Marquis Visconti Venosta was named an honorary Minister.

## PEACE IN LIMERICK GRIFFITH'S VICTORY

Compromise Effectuated and  
Rival Armies Leave City  
on Same Trains.

### TOWNSMEN FEEL RELIEF

Barracks Turned Over to  
Maintenance Parties Re-  
sponsible to Dublin.

Special Cable to THE NEW YORK HERALD.  
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New York Herald Bureau.  
Dublin, March 11.

The conference at Dublin last night reached a peace agreement, and to-day the rival armies are leaving Limerick, traveling on the same trains. Peace came just in time to stop an attack this morning by the irregulars.

The agreement provides that both sides leave the city, the barracks being turned over to maintenance parties composed of Limerick Irish republican army members, who are responsible to the General Headquarters at Dublin.

On the part of the irregulars it was an honorable capitulation. Ostensibly they made the regulars climb down, but an examination of the settlement shows that when the move is completed the only difference will be that the occupants of the barracks which the British turned over will be known as "maintenance parties." These parties will be composed, as always has been intended, of Limerick boys, placed there under the authority of and responsible to General Headquarters. Limerick is greatly relieved. The people crowd the doorways, watching

## Collins Goes to Cork, Gets a Great Reception

CORK, March 11.—Michael Collins, head of the Provisional Government, received an ovation when he arrived here to-night. Great crowds lined the mile route to the hotel. There were many bands and torchlight processions. The Irish Women's Society presented Mr. Collins with a bouquet of daffodils.

The irregulars forming in the streets in front of the hotels. Every one is smiling except the hotel proprietors, who have hurried to the headquarters of the irregulars to present scraps of paper on which acknowledgments of the number of lunches eaten, rooms occupied, cigarettes supplied, etc., are written. They have had the irregulars as guests for a week now and were forced to supply food daily and keep their rooms in order all without pay. The servants of the leading hotels had planned to quit to-day. But now they are busy mopping the floors and rearranging the rooms.

Detachments from both armies crowded the railway station all day long, some of the cars being filled with regulars and some with irregulars, but all feeling jolly and shouting. When asked to which side they belonged members of both factions would reply: "We are republicans." The irregulars call the others free staters and the regulars call their opponents mutineers.

The tension that seemed near the breaking point last night showed itself in the decidedly more pre-emptory demands of the irregulars. The guards at the hotels became stricter and the officers commanded anything they wanted with greater disregard for the population. One man received a new American automobile yesterday, but officers commandeered it before he had a chance to use it.

A political argument occurred late at night in the principal street. The troops in the nearest hotel assembled under arms, but nothing further occurred. The anti-climax with which the Limerick situation ends will be a strong factor in

strengthening the new government. While such a strong opposing party can flout its authority with impunity it will nevertheless be difficult to get these irregulars to leave home again after a second experience in which the opposition's bomb did not explode, the first being the expected split in the Ard Phais. The longer the provisional government can keep in a precarious peace the more it will become consolidated in the minds of the people as a de facto institution and the stronger will be its hands in meeting lack of discipline.

Despite De Valera's warning at the last meeting of the Dail Eireann, a new police force is being formed. The poison of the republicans is slowly but surely being drained.

## BURYING BELFAST MAN, ANOTHER IS SHOT DEAD

Exciting Funeral Procession  
in Outskirts of City.

BELFAST, March 11.—Hugh McNally was shot dead and another man was wounded at the funeral to-day of Herbert Hassard, a member of the Ulster Imperial Guard, who was shot Wednesday night. The funeral procession was fired on while going through Green-castle, a Sinn Fein area in the outskirts of Belfast, and the members of the funeral party replied.

The police version is that a party of toughs preceded the funeral procession ordering the storekeepers to close. One of them refused and this precipitated the firing.

#### BRITISH FARM ACREAGE OFF.

LONDON, March 11.—A reduction of 781,000 acres in the cultivated land in England and Wales is shown by Ministry of Agriculture's statistics for 1921. The reduction is figured from the total of 12,399,000 acres in 1918, when the area was greatly increased owing to the food production campaign.

#### NOT PAYING LEAGUE DUES.

LONDON, March 11.—Twenty-one members of the League of Nations have not paid their subscriptions for last year, according to an announcement in the House of Commons.

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THIS Spring exposition of coats and wraps is a Paris fashion review in America, for Bonwit Teller & Co. have assembled the choicest models from each and all of the grand couturiers of Paris, comprising a remarkable collection that provides the correct coat, cape or wrap for every occasion on the spring calendar—faithfully reproducing the Paris originals in all respects but price.

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PARIS creates a vogue for  
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with piquette, cordine, tricot  
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sonnetta and imported checked  
or heather tweeds in spring  
countryside colorings.



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